

New Reservoir on Fast-track

C-44 project provides additional storage to protect health of estuary, lagoon

Improved water quality and increased water storage are the backbone of Everglades restoration. The C-44 (St. Lucie Canal) reservoir is one of the three Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan reservoirs identified for accelerated construction. The two other facilities are located on the Caloosahatchee River (C-43) and in the Everglades Agricultural Area. Together, these reservoirs will significantly increase water storage availability and significantly reduce the need for damaging flood control releases from Lake Okeechobee to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries.

Flood control canals are the veins and arteries of the water system, connecting water bodies to each other throughout Central and South Florida. The St. Lucie Canal connects Lake Okeechobee to the south fork of the St. Lucie River, which flows into the St. Lucie Estuary and, ultimately, the Indian River Lagoon.

The C-44 component the Indian River Lagoon South restoration project, as part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, includes a 3,315-acre, 10-foot-deep above-ground reservoir and two 3,000-acre stormwater treatment areas. Like a doctor performing a bypass to relieve a blocked artery, the new reservoir will provide relief to the delicate health of the estuary and lagoon.

To accelerate the C-44 components, the South Florida Water Management District has implemented a public-private partnership for the first phase. The agreement is to produce a conceptual plan for the project on the identified site and complete approximately 15 percent of the detailed design. This phase will last through the end of July 2004, when the construction schedule will be finalized. Overall, the project has been accelerated by almost two years with completion scheduled by 2007.

“The most interesting part of the partnership is that it is the whole package in one effort,” said Project Manager David Unsell. “You can’t perform design without land, and the partners are providing both.”

The C-44 components will capture runoff from the area watershed, clean some or all of it, and then return it to the basin when there is a need. The Indian River Lagoon and the St. Lucie Estuary will benefit from improved timing and quality of water because of the reduction of nutrients in the water and more controlled amounts of freshwater releases, which will help maintain desirable salt water levels. In addition to improving water quality, the reservoir and treatment areas will increase available water supplies for the environment, people and farms.

Just like a strong backbone governs the health of your entire body, these restored water bodies will enhance the overall health of the Everglades ecosystem.

The Domino Effect – In Reverse

Local projects provide “bottom up” support to regional efforts



Sixty is a magical number in the South Florida Water Management District’s area of service, as 60 is the number of local water resource protection projects that will either be continued or revved up this year. These partnerships are positive examples of the domino effect – in reverse. Each local project props up and fits into the scope of larger projects, and all for the improvement of water management in the entire southern Florida region. When the prospect of carrying out key local initiatives dimmed due to a shortfall in state funding, the District used its expertise to make things happen.

District staff worked collaboratively with local elected officials, agency representatives, and sponsors to help get applications completed and submitted to the State Legislature in 2003. By doing the homework and the leg work, the District helped secure \$26 million in state funding for community projects for 2004. This is a portion of a total \$47 million earmarked in the 2004 District budget to assist local governments with water resource enhancements, including alternative water supply projects.

One critical project is Miami-Dade County’s C-4 Emergency Detention Basin. The impoundment will store excess stormwater to relieve flooding in Sweetwater, West Miami, and the Flagami neighborhood of the City of Miami. “Without the \$1.5 million in state money, we couldn’t finish the project this year,” said Victor Powell, project implementation director in the District’s Construction and Engineering Department.

Phase I of the C-4 Emergency Detention Basin, which includes a 450-acre sub-basin, inflow pump station and outflow control structure, was completed in November 2003. The District hosted a groundbreaking ceremony January 30 for Phase II of the impoundment – an additional 450-acre sub-basin and inflow pump station. The second sub-basin and pump station are expected to be completed by October 2004.

“The work being done by the water management district in the Tamiami Canal area is truly a win-win for all county residents,” said Miami-Dade County Commissioner Jose “Pepe” Diaz. “We’ve seen projects completed in one year, from design to construction. Now that’s government at its best.”

One million dollars will also be provided for the construction of water control structures in Southwest Ranches in the C-11 West Basin. The local project in south Broward County fits into the scope of a much larger initiative to improve overall water quality for the C-11 West Basin, water that ultimately is discharged into the Everglades. The local project is now in the design and permitting stages, and the state money will provide for start-up costs. “Residents in Southwest Ranches understand the long-term importance of these improvements,” said Neil Kalin, director of the South Broward Drainage District. “They realize, too, that they must foot the bill. However, with money provided through partnering efforts, landowner assessments will come in at a much lower rate.”

Whether large or small, the 60 projects ranging in funding amounts from \$15,000 to \$1.5 million will all contribute to local water resource initiatives.

For more information on local water resource protection projects throughout the agency’s 16-county jurisdiction, contact Rosie Byrd at (561) 682-6262.

Federal Funding Update

Congress demonstrates commitment to America’s Everglades

Matching the State of Florida’s financial commitment this year for Everglades and Kissimmee River restoration, the U.S. House and Senate FY04 Energy and Water Appropriations Conference approved funding for Everglades and Kissimmee River restoration projects, which are cost-shared by the state and our federal partners, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The bill was passed Nov. 21, 2003, with a total of \$150 million for construction projects related to the Everglades and Kissimmee River restoration.



From left, Henry Dean, Lennart Lindahl and Karen Marcus celebrate completion of the G-160 Loxahatchee Slough Spillway.

G-160 Loxahatchee Slough Spillway Dedicated

First step toward habitat recovery

In January, officials from the South Florida Water Management District and Palm Beach County cut a blue ribbon to celebrate completion of the new G-160 Loxahatchee Slough Spillway along the East C-18 canal in Palm Beach Gardens. South Florida Water Management District Governing Board Member Lennart E. Lindahl, District Executive Director Henry Dean and Palm Beach County Commission Chair Karen Marcus addressed the audience of approximately 100 guests and media.

The structure will provide environmental restoration to the slough and deliver essential freshwater flows to the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River.

“Today, along with our partner – Palm Beach County – we mark another milestone on our journey to restore the greater Everglades ecosystem,” Lindahl said.

The project is a component of the subregional Northern Palm Beach County Comprehensive Water Management Plan and the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan North Palm Beach County Project, Part 1.